

INSIDE MATWATCH.....

"The Widowmaker".....2
 Vince's Next Movie.....2
 TV TEMPO.....3

COMINGS & GOINGS.....5
 I REMEMBER.....6
 RATINGS RAP.....6



JUNE 12-18, 1989

MATWATCH

213 PINE HILLS AVE. AUBURN, AL. 36830 (205) 826-7522

VOL. 1, NO. 51

Steve's Sidelights By Steve Beverly

THE OLDEST GUY IN THE SHOW

I did it. I paid my four bucks. I looked and after 45 minutes, there still were only a dozen people in the theatre. And, boy, did I feel all of my 35 years. I don't think anyone in the show, other than myself, had taken eighth-grade algebra.

This won't be your typical trash review of NO HOLDS BARRED. I came. I saw. And I've watched far worse movies in my time. I'm still not certain I want 13-year-olds using these guys for role models. But let's look at the real story of what NHB has accomplished for Vince McMahon.

First, the \$4.9 million the movie grossed in its first weekend. Not a good figure but not a bad one (hardly the standing room only, though, as described by Gorilla Monsoon). Our early reports of soft houses in the Northeast and Los Angeles were accurate---but this film drew its biggest following in the Midwest and Great Lakes regions.

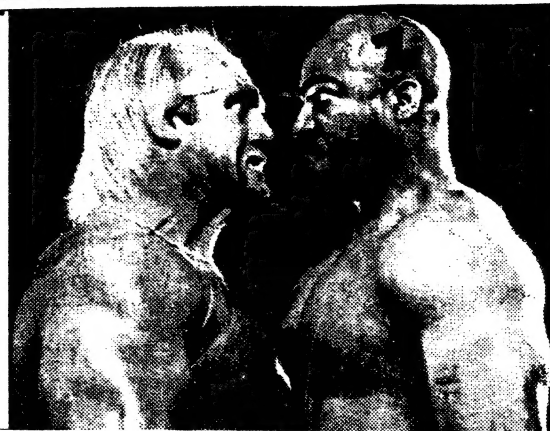
National film analyst Richard Cutter told MATWATCH, "Interestingly, this movie did its best numbers at inner-city theatres with heavily black audiences. The appeal of Zeus apparently drew a large number of younger black viewers." Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis reported major draws in downtown theatres.

In the view of L.A. film expert Chris Crosby, the financial totals for NHB may be deceiving...yet they have given McMahon the opportunity to truthfully say he had the top-grossing new movie of this week. "You don't really judge a film's legs until the second weekend and see how much of a dropoff there is from the first week," says Crosby. "The \$4.9 million is a good-looking figure but, remember, NO HOLDS BARRED was sent to 1,300 screens---almost twice as many as the average movie is shown on in the U.S. So, on a per-screen basis (about \$3,500 per), the figures don't look that good because the distribution costs are higher."

Most experts are telling us about \$12 million went into the overall project and Crosby says NHB will have to gross about \$30-35 million to break even.

However, I am reminded of the public relations textbook, EXPOSURE: THE HIDDEN PROFIT. Whether NHB makes a significant profit, McMahon has gained the most important ancillary success for this film: exposure for the WWF, Hulk Hogan, and himself. Either Hogan or McMahon appeared on every network morning show, on two late-night talk shows and all the major showbiz news shows. For a solid month, the Titan machine was kept in the mind of the mainstream public in a fashion no other wrestling group has yet managed. Therein lies the real profit for McMahon.

Yes, I grew weary of the hype; and no, I don't now and never have liked the creative lying of Titan



about its entire effort. But McMahon knows the masses don't care and some of the greatest promotion for already-successful enterprises is reinforcement. Bad movie or not, do you know of any better reinforcement for a figure such as Hogan as you've seen in the last six weeks?

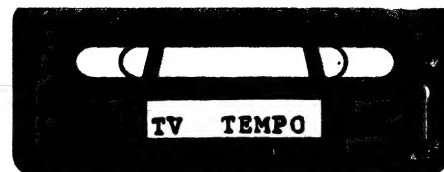
A CRUCIAL CLASH

From a personal perspective, I'm not sure any CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS special has had as much significance for TBS, since the very first one, as this week's CLASH VII. It is history for most of you as you read this but I see it as vital to regenerating interest in nightly arena shows for the NWA.

We've been told everything "will begin to come together" on this CLASH as far as this summer's NWA marriages and GREAT AMERICAN BASH matchups. One difficulty encompasses having to introduce so much new talent on one show: Scott Hall, Sid Vicious, Brian Pillman, the Dingdongs, Norman---and repackaged personalities: the New Zealand Militia, the Ebony Experience, etc. One has to hope that viewers won't be too cramped trying to sort out all the new faces and combinations.

Success for this show will be measured in two avenues: one, its rating (NWA officials are hoping desperately for a five); and two, in the ensuing gates at house shows---something I still believe Ric Flair's return must be the catalyst to stimulate marked improvement. Just talking to casual fans at the Columbus, Ga., TV tapings last week indicated to me how much Flair has been missed from the promotion.

From a TV standpoint, the tough competition won't be from the networks but from cable itself. The USA network has had big success with a series of made-for-cable movies in recent weeks and its airing of the heavily-promoted TRAPPED from 9-11 p.m. could be a challenge. The last USA movie drew a 4.8 rating. This CLASH not only has to be a good one---it must be (or have been) an outstanding one to gain its necessary audience exposure.



starts wild melee w. Grappler. Haynes is caught and held by Jackson & C.W. before Piper beats off the heels & Haynes swears revenge. PILEDRIVER.

(CMF) - Bill Dundee d. Kevin Dillinger; Don Harris/Tom Prichard d. Jackie Fulton/Mike Surevich; Greg Brown wins DQ over Mike Davis for over top; Beauty d. Tom Lively; Adrian Street d. Thomas Ivey; Mortons/Danny Davis d. Lou Spiccoli/Lou Fabiano/Johnny Gilbert. VIDEOS: Beauty, Street. ANGLE: Miss Linda slaps Beauty for calling her a bimbo. RESTHOLD.

LINE OF THE WEEK - 1. Jim Cornette, TBS, introing M Ex: "The only guys who get more action in Atlanta than Rob Lowe." 2. Paul E. Dangerously, TBS: "You don't drink & drive. Don't drive over a bridge with Ted Kennedy and don't double date with Rob Lowe." 3. Cornette, TBS: "This week 2 great world events happened: the Ayatollah croaked & the Midnight Express won its first round match." 4. Jim Ross, WWN, on Hayes pulling down Luger's trunks: "It looked quite obviously like the moon was shining." 5. Dusty Rhodes, WEF: "This is baloney and we are all full of it." 6. Rhodes, WEF: "You can beat my prices but you sure can't beat my meat." 7. Marc Lowrance, MCCW, on Dusek attack: "This is absolutely sickening---and I've been told never to use that word." 8. Jesse Ventura, WEF: "Here's a guy (Heidhart) not playing with a full deck and I'm not just talking about the jokers." 9. Ventura, WEF: "There's a couple (Savage & Sherri) right from heaven, McMahon." 10. Roddy Piper, PORTLAND: "If Haynes wants to quit, he should get out. But if you want to be a man, get in the ring & do something."

11. Dick Murdoch, TBS: "There's a lot of air between his (Funk's) ears." 12. Joe Pedicino, NWA, on Norman: "I can't say he's good looking." 13. Teddy Long, NWA, to Bob Caudle & Lance Russell: "Both of you are blind and senile." 14. Lowrance, MCCW: "It's a gangup... maybe even a setup on Frank Dusek." 15. Johnny Valiant, AWA: "Derrick DuKes looks like he has 95 Sucrets stamped on his trunks." 16. Tom Prichard, CMF, on Dothan fans: "They're all legally stupid." 17. Charlie Platt, CMF, to Prichard: "We certainly didn't roll out the red carpet for you." 18. Cornette, TBS: "Don't bring no pineapples, SST. They're just fruit salad." 19. Michael Hayes, TBS, on Rick Steiner: "He's a frustrated nerd." 20. Ross & Hayes, TBS: (JR) "I remember the UWF. I was around then. (NH) "I made you a star there. 21. Hayes & Ross, TBS: (NH) "Guess who the new Freebird is." (JR) "Lord Littlebrook." 22. Valiant, AWA: "If Millman delivered milk to my condo, I'd kill the cow."

STRONGEST COMMENTS: 1. Missy Hyatt, NWA, to Gary Hart: "I know a real man and you're no man." 2. Bad News Brown, WEF: "I don't need no managers. I don't need no partners. I don't need anybody." 3. Lex Luger, TBS: "Terry Funk should be arguing over the BOTTOM 10! Who has he beat?" 4. Lowrance, MCCW, on Devastation: "A pretty sorry excuse for human

behavior." 5. Murdoch, TBS: "This profession makes your attitude bad a lot of times."

BEST PICTURES - 1. NWA PRO, Funk-Sting brawl. 2. MCCW, Dusek angle. 3. WWN, Luger-Sting match. 4. WEF, Honky-Snuka angle. 5. TBS, Fatu eating pineapple.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Paul E., TBS: "Have I ever lied to you before?" 2. Ventura, WEF: "Isn't that the stuff you stick in your hair, McMahon, bear grease?" 3. Adrian Street, CMF, to Beauty: "Who are you? Tom Prichard's ugly sister?"

INSIDE INFO - Sean Mooney, WEF: "On Hillbilly Jim's training table are possum fritters and deviled haukeyes."

ORAL ROBERTS AWARD - Luger, NWA, on regaining U.S. title: "I feel sanctified. I feel cleansed. I feel reborn."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. "A Kingdom of Morons," given by Sullivan to First Family. 2. "Sgt.-at-Arms," by Akbar to Harold Harris.

DREADED GLITCH AWARD - 1. SCW, for abrupt interruption of show on WXTX, Columbus (see COMINGS & GOINGS). 2. AWA, for plugging May 20 card on ESPN.

BLOOPER AWARDS - 1. TBS, for TV GUIDE print ad for CLASH featuring pic of Barry Windham. 2. Ring announcer, NWA PRO, for calling SST "Samolian Suat Team" and saying Knight & Meadows were "versing" the SST. 3. Unnamed color commentator, SCW, for calling host Tim Dicks "Tim Duke." 4. TBS, for plugging Greenville SC card as Greenville NC.

BOO AWARDS - 1. SCW, for never identifying color announcer. This show should get the boot. 2. WDEF-TV, Chattanooga, for repeatedly airing CMF at times other than TV listings show. 3. TBS, for joining Dudes-Militia match in progress without properly establishing Militia.

TUBE TALK: Many Sat. callers say Luger's interview on TBS one of his best ever. It was much better than his old Horseman stuff... I liked the "interrupt-the-interview" technique used in Luger-Steamboat-Funk... Did I miss a clear explanation on TBS of how Luger got his belt back? Not everyone has syndication and I don't think it was detailed... I also liked the Dusek MCCW stretcher job. It was well shot. But when they go outside, they need a battery light... Badd Co. split on AWA good but more closeups needed.

Platt & Prichard really jelling on CMF but show had much sameness Saturday... Early reax to Dusty spots are hardcore fans think they're an embarrassment but believe WEF fans will love them... CLASH VII to be repeated July 27 at 11:05 pm (EDT)... Savage-Horner WEF match indicative why Tim should be more than a jobber... Slick & Twin Towers to guest w. ARSENIO HALL Friday night.

COMINGS & GOINGS

ANOTHER HEAD-ON?: Totally unconfirmed here but NBC, we are told, has been approached by Titan to do its summer MAIN EVENT on Sunday night, July 23, from 7-9 p.m., a usually weak-rated time for the Peacock network. Guess who has a pay-per-view skedded at that hour? But NBC is non-committal and unlikely to accept.

ON HOLD: A reliable source is telling MATWATCH the Merv Griffin-Bruno Sammartino venture into wrestling appears to be on hold again. The same source says Merv's initial plan was to combine elements of amateur wrestling with pro or possibly a concept similar to Japan's UWF.

TOJO, TOJO: MCCW followers are split on the latest angle, making the promotion the heel. Eric Embry was to take on Tojo Yamamoto in Dallas last Friday after Tojo was discovered to be the "silent owner of World Class," calling all the recent shots. Fans either hate it or love it.

MYSTERY GUEST: MATWATCH has learned a major Southern star has been approached about wrestling on an NWA Bash card in his home city. Our latest word is the star has not ruled it out. It would be a giant surprise if it happens.

ON TV: This Saturday's WORLD WIDE show will likely feature a Great Muta-Dick Murdoch main event, though it was confusing in Columbus as to what matches were being taped for which show. Sixteen bouts were shot. On June 24, I think you'll see Dynamic Dudes vs. New Zealand Militia and Muta vs. Scott Steiner---but one of those may have been for MAIN EVENT, as was a Ricky Steamboat-Bill Irwin match. Since these were for TV, I'll not tell the finishes.

GETTING OVER: Of all the new NWA talent, Sid Vicious---in my view---was over the best and he did an excellent job of working the crowd as a heel. He won't go down as a strong worker but if he can develop a monster personality, it won't matter, if you follow the Vince philosophy. Brian Pillman had a lukewarm reaction, as did the Militia---but I'm convinced it's because they have not yet wrestled on TV and a lot of folks didn't know who they were. But no reax to speak of for Irwin or Ricky Santana.

I LIKE TEDDY: I'm impressed at how strong the heel reax is to Teddy Long. He didn't (won't) even have a team until Wednesday night and he was solidly booed every time he went to ringside in Columbus. Peanuthead, if used well, will be a big star, in my view.

DON'T RUSH IT: Eddie Gilbert's knee is responding well and he's shooting to be back in action by next Thursday. This young man is too talented to risk further injury, so I hope Eddie's not pushing it too quickly.

SUPERSTARS ENDS: The four-year-old SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING block will end on WVEU in Atlanta July 1. Home Shopping Network, new owners of WVEU, gave host Boni Blackstone the word last week. Boni is trying to put together a syndicated SUPERSTARS for independent stations in Georgia. She and ex-PWTN producer Ken LaMorta are now co-hosting a new highlight show for international markets, PRO WRESTLING REVIEW.

ANOTHER CLASSIC: Here's a goodie: last week, 20 minutes into the SCM show on WXTX in Columbus, the tape cuts mid-match to a match from last September at the Cobb County Civic Center with Joe Pedicino & Rick Stewart on the commentary. The rest of the show was from that same September show, along with plugs for October matches. How does that happen?

ON THEIR WAY: Nelson Royal had cut interviews for an ATLANTIC COAST show at Cobb July 2 but with the NWA in Atlanta a few days later, Nelson has Atlanta debut to late July. No word on if he'll combine forces with Jerry Blackwell. It'll be a tough sell with these promotions losing Atlanta TV.

FAMILY WAY: Doug Gilbert (The Raider) is returning to the CWA as a heel June 14 and Tommy Gilbert is due back as a face in the Freddy Krueger outfit Jerry Lawler wore a few weeks back.

PEAKING OUT?: I'm hearing some CWF fan comment that Continental may be peaking again. I think it's too early to say that but I do believe Adrian Street is only effective as an attraction for about a month and he's wearing thin already. Our friend David Williamson tells us WDEF in Chattanooga is continuing to foul up listed times for CWF.

STUDDLESS: John Studd has quit the WEF for an unspecified reason. Word has it that Hillbilly Jim will be given his slot and will assume the old Haystacks Calhoun gimmick of a lucky horseshoe when he comes to the ring.

OH YES, HE IS: Getting over...at least Dusty Rhodes is. He had a phenomenal pop at the June 4 Boston Garden show in his win over Ted DiBiase. Dusty had to do one job for DiBiase in the last week ("attitude adjustment," we're told). But I believe Dusty will draw his biggest WEF following in Northern and Western cities where he did not burn out with the NWA, not in the South.

I'LL BE CHECKING: Dusty has told his troops he'll be checking in on the PWF almost daily by phone or fax. He definitely will retain his 60% share and has said certain angles will be tried out in Florida and if they work, they'll eventually be used in the WEF.

PH DOCTOR: Dr. Gerald Morton, author of the book WRESTLING TO RASSLIN', was involved in a major interview on EVENING MAGAZINE in a number of U.S. cities two weeks ago. Dr. Morton came out heavily

against the style of wrestling in the NEF in a segment which also featured Hogan. Interestingly, this is one of the few hard pieces in which Titan participated and could not control the tone. In our anniversary issue in two weeks, we will have a one-on-one interview with Dr. Morton.

RATINGS RAP: CABLE

Week Ending June 5	Rtg	Shr	Homes
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 6/4)	3.2	9.4	1.51 mil.
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 6/5)	2.7	4.4	1.27 mil.
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 6/4)	2.5	5.8	1.23 mil.
NWA WORLD CHAMP. (TBS 6/3)	2.0	4.4	982,000
NWA MAIN EVENT AM (TBS 6/3)	0.7	7.1	344,000

(ANALYSIS: This was an all-time high share for ALL-AMERICAN, which tied TBS' THE GREEN BERETS in rating. PRIME TIME stayed flat in share. TBS officials were optimistic when WCW hit a 2.3 and 5 share in the 7:45-8 period [the 8-9 hour trended down]'. NME did its highest in several weeks and peaked at a 6 share at 6:45.)

500: WE MADE IT !!!

Our 500th subscriber (and I promise no conspiracy here) is Broadway Danny Wolf of FNN/SCORE but the free 8-issue subscription goes to his "giver," Dan Farren of Reseda CA. Thanks loads, Dan, and to all of you who have helped us get to 500.

Our rates until July 15 are, as follows:

U.S.: \$5 for 8 issues, \$26 for 1 year.
OVERSEAS: \$7 for 7 issues, \$50 for 1 year.

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I REMEMBER: Mr. Wrestling vs. Dr. Scarlet

Travel back to May 1973, near the end of a classic "Cadillac tournament" in Atlanta. Mr. Wrestling, who had made a monumental return to Georgia rings (after unmasking as Tim Woods in Florida), was pitted against Killer Kowalski in a quarterfinal tourney match on GEORGIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING.

But early in the show, Gordon Solie told viewers a heretofore unknown Dr. Scarlet had bought the contract of Kowalski (a classic trick to tease a prominent name). Enter a 300-pounder with very little body fat, powerful legs and a scarlet mask and full-body suit.

Jack Brisco, who was being cajoled by his "friend," Cowboy Bill Watts, to join in his crusade against masked men (namely Wrestling I and II), was at the color mike for the mask. Brisco, the ultimate all-American of the day, had a popular following but Georgia fans didn't cotton to his hinting at a match against the white knights. Brisco didn't seem comfortable about it at all.

After a classic four minutes of wrestling, Dr. Scarlet threw out the stops, going in for a massive choke of Mr. Wrestling, attempting a piledriver and going for his mask. Instead, Mr. W used three powerful elbows to break free and began twisting the mask of Scarlet. After a suplex, the blinded Scarlet had no choice but to throw off the hood and reveal himself as Watts.

Mr. Wrestling quickly went for his patented 3/4 nelson and grapevine to score the pin but was mercilessly beaten by Watts after the match. A dismayed Brisco left the desk in disgust at Watts.

In what stood out as one of the most aggressive interviews of Woods' career, the masked man announced he was withdrawing from the Cadillac tourney and placing his mask on the line against the Georgia title of Watts. We'll remember that one next week.

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